The Significance of Physical Exercise for the Racial Preservation of the German People
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Physical exercises are no longer to be understood within the racial-political aspirations of the Third Reich from an individualistic perspective, but only in connection with the preservation and improvement of the national whole.

It is desirable that the liberalistic view of sport as an end in itself, typical of the past era, be overcome and that the purpose of all physical exercise be recognised in the context of national fitness.

Physical exercise: we wish to understand it in the sense that the body is trained for the sake of higher life-performance, not merely for higher athletic performance. This must never be the goal, but only the means of any physical education. Of course, one cannot demand that all athletes are clear about the essential significance of physical exercise: just as it is not necessary for a soldier who performs a great and brave deed to understand the strategic meaning of a military manoeuvre. The main thing is that the athlete is generally physically improved, that willpower is increased and that fighting spirit is cultivated.

Figure 1

Everything that is acquired here during practice and in competition in terms of physical prowess benefits not only the individual but the people as a whole, by consequently raising the nation's physical fitness.

For women as well, the gain lies not only in the general increase of physical vitality, but also in the associated capacity for performance. That this, as well as vitality, can be jeopardised by inappropriate physical activity has been sufficiently proven, and should prompt women to turn to physical activity befitting their nature, above all gymnastics, and if possible under conscientious, expert guidance.

Of particular importance is the enhancement of athletic performance in competition. Competition demands, if one wishes to contest it successfully, such great willpower that only the most earnest physical work, combined with a Spartan lifestyle, can lead to the goal. Through this preparatory work, which is carried out in obscurity, competition first acquires its educational meaning. For without the challenge of measuring one athlete's strength against another and the associated increase, great achievements would generally not be accomplished. Thus, ambition and competitive spirit are placed in the service of physical training. These means are by no means new to us in the education of the armed forces (decorations, prize competitions, etc.).

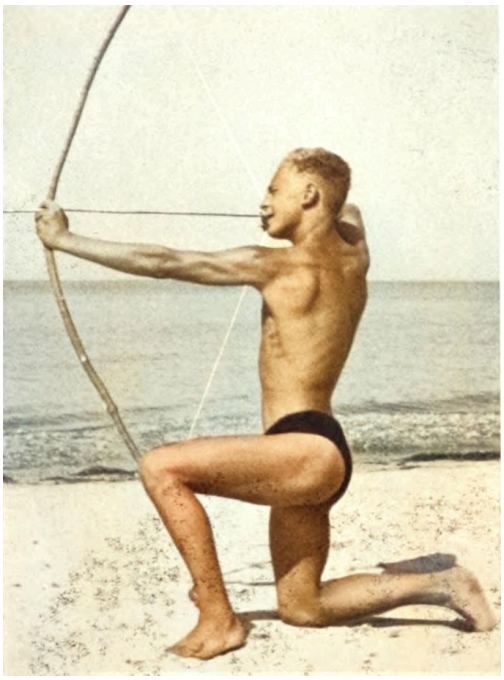

Figure 2

If, in addition to the aforementioned stimulating effect of competitive games, one also counts the recruiting element in the national sense, which adheres to every great public event, a further essential significance of competitive games still remains unconsidered: the selective/breeding effect. Here we should be interested in the corresponding cultural phenomena of the racially related Greek people. Arising from eugenic considerations, the competitive games were established in Sparta around 600 BC. All youths and maidens were to compete in these without clothing. First, they were hardened in this way, and then there arose the unique high level of physical training on the unclothed body. It is clear that in this way a valuation of physical beauty among the youth was cultivated, and attention was also drawn to racial differences, insofar as such existed at all. But the most important thing is the racial selection connected with this: undoubtedly, the most beautiful and able-bodied of the youths and maidens will have found their way to one another, and thus ensured racial selection and racial preservation.

Figure 3

For Greek culture at that time, the concept of the most beautiful human being was still synonymous with the Nordic type. If we compare sculptures from that era with our best Nordic youth of today, we have the impression of a genuine similarity in physique and bearing.
In the decorative relief from the Temple at Aegina (Figure 1) and the Nordic athlete (Figure 2), we see the same strength and composure in expression, along with a correspondence in body structure. Compare this with the depiction of the decorative relief by the French sculptor Bourdelle (Figure 3).
The entire conception stems from an entirely different racial sensibility. It is not the calm and closed composure that prevails, but rather a passionate movement extending into the smallest muscle, an exaggerated, ostentatious exertion of muscular strength, which bulges out abnormally.
Note also the Middle Eastern facial features and the claw-like formation of the feet. What manifests here is a purely impulsive approach to the bow-like tension with wild force, whereas in the first two examples it is more controlled and deliberate.

It is to be assumed that in the Greek competitions it was precisely the best Nordic race that distinguished itself—an observation that can also be made today at major athletic competitions in Germany and indeed in other countries. The participants in the competitions each represent a significant positive selection compared to the total body of those engaging in sports, as could again be observed at this year's German Winter Championships.
Thus, the ideal physique of the athlete will have been Nordic race both among the Greeks of the Archaic period and among us—and this not merely on the basis of physical characteristics, but as a total appearance, in style, and indeed in the entire exemplary mental bearing. It corresponds to the Greek striving for balance (harmony) that the masterful contest became the focal point of the competitive games, and the victorious all-around athlete was the most accomplished competitor.

Figure 4

Through wise foresight, limits were thus placed on specialisation. With the racial degeneration of the Greek people, these racial-political lines of thought also faded, and a specialist mentality forced itself to the fore, which is best illustrated by the brutal depictions of fistfighters in later times. As in all of Greek life, foreign-racial elements also appeared in the arena in later periods.

Specialisation in sport does not necessarily have to be harmful, but it usually develops the body one-sidedly, and therefore does not correspond to the benefit of a general physical education in the sense of making our youth fit for defence. Among the sportsmen of the present day, the all-around athlete and master Hans Heinz Sievert is therefore likely to represent an ideal figure. He is a farmer's son of Nordic race and is probably the best athlete in the world. Antiquity also shows how close the relationship between physical exercise and art can be. The victor in the contest was immortalised by sculptors and thus stands for all time in the arena of striving youth as a model of achievement and of racial ideal form.

One must realise the great inspirational moment of how it spurs on the competing youth to win such an honour. The arena gave the ancient artist the best opportunity to study the body, and there he found the most magnificent models. Today, a sports field offers the same possibility. An artist there, if his eye is trained for physique, would find equally good models of the best Nordic race, if he seriously endeavoured to do so. The past generation of artists, however, in its racial disintegration and decadence, had almost completely lost the eye for the racially good human being and preferred to depict the so-called "interesting" (i.e. ugly) human being.

Figure 5

In reality, however, no great art can grow without an ideal of beauty; above all, the idea of the beautiful must be rooted in the spirit, as was the case with the Greeks. For today's art, the task is not to create an ideal of beauty through the idealisation of a halfway Nordic human being; rather, the first-class Nordic human being in physique and expression must be discovered (Figure 4) and depicted again and again by artists until the pure image of a coming generation stands before us as a model.

The sculptors of antiquity worked no differently. Through the centuries, the striding Apollo was fashioned; generations trained themselves on this single task until it was shaped in perfected beauty. Only in this way can great art arise. Christian art, too, depicted Christ, Mary, and the saints again and again, and through all stylistic epochs varied and deepened that one theme—though, to be sure, in a sense that almost never emphasised the healthy, strong body and the deed-joyful soul.

However, the high-quality and capable body is not merely an innate gift, but must be worked toward through the hard discipline of physical exercise to achieve genuine strength and expressiveness. Herein lies one of the most significant tasks of physical exercise: the physical breeding-education of the racially best youth, which, on the basis of physical breeding-value, will have a healthily firm foundation and also a better opportunity to assert itself in life.

At the same time, the high-quality body of the Nordic athlete is the most convincing means of recruitment for the Nordic idea in general, especially when it appears as a group or team (Figure 5). Only when the goal of breeding-education is realised not merely in the mind but also physically, and when the perfect Nordic body and Nordic expression are placed before the eyes of the people as an ideal image, again and again on every occasion, can a thoroughgoing racial improvement be crowned with success.